



GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE

MAY 2006



USAID continues to be a principal supporter in preserving Madagascar's rich forests. This not only helps protect one of the world's most unique repository of biodiversity but also greatly assists in mitigating the effects of climate change through maintaining Madagascar's extensive carbon sinks.

USAID's partners in climate change activities in Madagascar include*:

- Ministry of Environment, Water and Forests
- Malagasy Forest Service
- Malagasy National Park Service
- National Office of the Environment
- Conservation International (CI)
- World Wide Fund for Nature
- Wildlife Conservation Society
- International Resources Group (IRG)
- Chemonics International
- Development Alternatives, Inc. (DAI)
- United States Forest Service
- United States Geological Survey

*Because partners change as new activities arise, this list of partners is not comprehensive.

Background. Madagascar, an island nation in the Indian Ocean east of southern Africa, is home to flora and fauna unlike anywhere else in the world. However, its unique natural resource base and rich biodiversity are threatened by deforestation, bush fires, soil erosion, and declining soil productivity. These natural resources are not only important for the economic development challenges that the country faces but also for mitigating climate change. Protecting forests and vegetation is beneficial to the climate because they remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store carbon both above ground in their biomass and in the soils below.

Sector-Specific Climate Change Activities. USAID helps protect Madagascar's unique resources against further environmental degradation by building local capacity to manage forest and agricultural resources in a more sustainable manner.

Capacity Building and Natural Resource Management. Through various capacity-building activities, USAID is helping Madagascar to better understand the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and achieve the goals under the Convention. Based on a request from the president of Madagascar, USAID helped launched a national bush fire campaign to reduce the overall impact of uncontrolled bush fires across the country. From a climate perspective, forest and bush fires are undesirable because they release carbon emissions to the atmosphere. To monitor the impact of this program, USAID provided trainings to the Malagasy Forestry Service at national and regional levels to collect data and analyze satellite imagery of night fires in Madagascar. These data assist in determining whether activities to reduce both bush fires and slash-and-burn agriculture are having an impact in areas of key biodiversity habitats and contribute to monitoring the Malagasy forest cover. Additionally, in 2004, USAID supported the establishment of the National Forestry Technical Committee, a public-private platform to enhance good governance within the forestry sector.

Providing Economic Alternatives. In addition to monitoring slash and burn practices, USAID seeks to provide attractive alternatives to such farming approaches. One effective intervention encourages the growth and export of lychees, a local fruit. Thirty thousand households have participated in lychee production and over 15,000 have adopted new agricultural techniques, which resulted in a 55% increase in income. Additionally, 12 communes earned USAID's "green commune" designation by implementing activities to reduce slash and burn practices and promote sustainable management of natural resources.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- **Developing Protected Areas.** Working with the Government of Madagascar, USAID, with the help of national environment and development actors and national authorities, created a total of 1,147,846 hectares of new protected areas in 2005—exceeding its target of one million. Part of the Madagascar Protected Areas System (SAPM), this initiative has succeeded in encouraging regional and local actors to take a leadership role in creating protected areas.
- **Adopting Sustainable Practices.** USAID developed the Green Communes concept, an approach that provides communes who have improved their conservation management practices with a “green label” certification, allowing them to be eligible for increased funding levels for development activities. A total of 263 green communes were certified in 2004 alone.

To build the capacity of the government, local nongovernmental organizations, and communities to improve management of their natural resources, USAID supports a variety of training and technical assistance activities. For example, USAID has provided support for the management of the National Park System of Madagascar, which maintains a Protected Area Network that spans 1,774,575 hectares and encompasses 84% of the critical biodiversity habitats in the country. As a result, protected area management practices have improved by integrating ecological monitoring into park management and by mapping conservation target areas.

USAID also supports the transfer of management of forest areas from the government to local communities. This transfer provides local communities the incentive to stop destructive slash-and-burn agricultural practices and to adhere to more sustainable forms of land use. As a result of this activity, the rate of deforestation has begun to slow considerably.

For more information on Madagascar, visit USAID/Madagascar’s Mission Web site at:

<http://www.usaid.gov/missions/mg>